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## EDITORIAL COMMENT



### PROPOSED AFFILIATION WITH THE RED CROSS SOCIETY

ON February 23 a number of well-known women in the nursing profession came together in New York for committee work of different kinds, and quite informally a group of New York women met with them on the evening of the day mentioned to discuss several questions of importance to nurses.

The out-of-town members present were Miss Mary M. Riddle, president of the Associated Alumnae; Miss M. Adelaide Nutting, president of the American Federation of Nurses; Miss Isabel McIsaac, president of THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING Company; Miss Sophia F. Palmer, editor of THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING, and the five Chicago members of the Class in Hospital Economics at Teachers College.

Of the well-known New York women there were present Miss Maxwell, of the Presbyterian Hospital; Miss Delano, of Bellevue; Miss Wilson, of St. Luke's; Miss Sanborn, of St. Vincent's; Miss Pindell, of the Metropolitan; Mrs. Dean, of Mt. Sinai; Miss Gilmour, of the New York City Training-School; Miss Mary E. Thornton, secretary of the Associated Alumnae, and others.

The very recent declaration of war between Russia and Japan brought up the question of the position American nurses should take in time of either national or international calamity of any kind, and it was the consensus of opinion that some action should be taken that would place American nurses always in an impartial attitude of readiness when their services were needed, either at home or abroad.

In a free and informal discussion the following points were brought out:

1. American trained nurses to be at all times in a position to render aid to suffering humanity, regardless of nationality or creed, should be affiliated in some way with the National Red Cross Society of America.

2. Such affiliation should be consummated through some one of the existing nursing organizations.

3. The American Federation of Nurses was suggested as a possible channel for such affiliation, as that organization, being a union of the Associated Alumnae and the Superintendents' Society for membership in the National Council of Women, might easily have its functions extended with the sanction and coöperation of the two societies concerned.

An informal committee was appointed to learn, if possible, if there was necessity for immediate provision for service at the seat of war in the East, and to ascertain if the National Red Cross Society had so far completed its reorganization that it could consider a proposition for such proposed affiliation, if made through the proper official channel.

It is an authentic fact that the Russian Red Cross Society has six million five hundred thousand dollars in its treasury and owns property amounting to three million dollars more. It has four thousand trained nurses on its list, two thousand five hundred of whom are sisters.

The Japanese Red Cross has more than four million dollars in its treasury,

with an annual income of one million dollars from various sources, and it has two thousand five hundred trained nurses enrolled. These figures would seem to indicate that unless the war in the East is of prolonged duration, the services of American nurses will not be a necessity for either country.

The first Japanese training-school was organized by our own Miss Linda Richards, and the development of trained nursing in Japan has been quite as remarkable as it has been in the United States. The advantages of a nursing service composed of women who speak the language of the country needs no comment.

In the fifth resolution of the Conference of Geneva in 1863, it is stated that the Red Cross Committee of belligerent nations "can solicit the assistance of the committee belonging to neutral nations," but it is customary when such a request is made for the committee rendering aid to obtain the consent of the other belligerent nation, and where assistance is proffered it is customary to offer such aid to the Red Cross Societies of both countries. Such aid has been offered to the Red Cross Societies of both Japan and Russia by Germany and France.

Unfortunately, the Red Cross Society in our own country is not at present in a position to render aid in any form. There have been difficulties, as is very well known, in the management, and there is practically no money in the treasury. The society is now in a condition of reorganization, and this reconstruction period would seem to be a very proper time for American nurses to endeavor to obtain some form of affiliation which would identify American nurses with the National Red Cross Society.

At the Superintendents' meeting, held in Pittsburg in October, a resolution was adopted giving the councillors power to act for the society on any public questions that might arise during the year. The meeting of the Associated Alumnae will be held soon and it would seem an opportune occasion for the subject of affiliation with the National Red Cross Society to be considered.

#### THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF NURSES.

Growing out of the informal conference already mentioned has come another suggestion that seems to contain possibilities for the future.

The American Federation of nurses at present means little more than a name. There would seem to be a growing need for a National Society of District and Settlement Nurses. There is a possibility of a Navy Nursing Corps. We already have the Army Nursing Corps, the Superintendents' Society, the Associated Alumnae, State associations, and St. Barnabas Guild, and the idea comes from one of our bright women that we use the American Federation of Nurses as a means of affiliating all of these different organizations and classes of workers.

It is a gigantic suggestion that takes one's breath away, but it contains possibilities that would make the American Federation a splendid avenue for affiliation with the Red Cross Society, and shows the trend of thought in some directions.

#### OTHER SUGGESTIONS.

As we go to press still another suggestion comes to us from a prominent leader in organization work. Referring to the affiliation with the Red Cross she says: "In two months more the annual meeting of the Associated Alumnae will be held, and I hope at that time the question will be agitated and, if possible, a strong working committee be formed with power to coöperate with the local

alumnae everywhere to the end that each State shall have a body of nurses organized and ready to be called out as easily as the State militia."

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Miss Damer's paper comes too late for comment, but it speaks for itself.

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#### THE JOURNAL OWNERSHIP

WE notice that the Alumnae Association of the Maryland University Hospital, Baltimore, was very prompt in acting upon our suggestion in the March number that the future ownership of the JOURNAL should be considered carefully by the local associations, and we are glad to see that the Maryland University nurses voted that the "Associated Alumnae should own THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING," but we miss any suggestion of the amount of money that this alumnae will contribute as its share of the fund that must be raised to enable the Associated Alumnae to purchase the JOURNAL from its present owners. It is not enough that the local associations *vote* that the Associated Alumnae shall own the JOURNAL; they must state in unmistakably plain terms what they will do towards raising the money to be given as a free gift to the Associated Alumnae, otherwise it is only a waste of time to vote for "ownership." It is a question of available funds, and not of promises.

Beginning with the first meeting of the Associated Alumnae, held in Baltimore, the subject of the magazine has been discussed at every annual meeting. A Committee on Periodical was appointed at this meeting, and it is a matter of history, recorded in the annual reports, that this committee came back year after year and reported no progress. The JOURNAL could not be established without capital, and the Associated Alumnae as an organization could not provide the financial backing necessary for so extensive an undertaking.

The personnel of the Committee on Periodical changed from year to year, different chairmen taking the matter in hand; finally Miss M. E. P. Davis was asked to take the chairmanship, with Miss Fulmer, Miss Nutting, Miss Stevenson, Mrs. Robb, and Miss Palmer as her associates. Miss Davis accepted the chairmanship with the distinct understanding with her committee "that something would have to be done," and the success of the JOURNAL to-day stands as a result of the work of that committee.

In organizing a stock company of a few individual members of the alumnae the committee acted with the full knowledge and endorsement of the association. The work was done for the association, the magazine was established as the official organ of the association, but the actual legal ownership had to be in the hands of the few individual members of the association who had advanced the capital, with the understanding and belief that when the Associated Alumnae should have gained in strength, both in members and experience, it would be able to reimburse the stockholders for their actual financial outlay, and take over the management of the magazine as a part of the association's work.

There are some plain, hard facts to be considered in connection with this question. Financially, the Associated Alumnae is no better equipped to-day to buy the JOURNAL than it was in the beginning to start it. Last year it had a deficiency in its treasury.

Individually the members of the Associated Alumnae have shown a peculiar lack of professional responsibility for the JOURNAL's support. The subscription list is smaller in proportion in the great alumnae centres than it is in the country

at large. The JOURNAL has grown to be a much greater business undertaking than its most sanguine promoters ever anticipated. Its successful management is quite unlike the ordinary work of an alumnæ association. It requires a knowledge of business methods, of the laws of incorporation, of the United States postal requirements, and of the special methods of conducting a JOURNAL on competitive lines.

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING is not just our own little magazine. It has a place and has become a power in the journalistic world. All of these facts must be taken into consideration by the local alumnæ associations and by the Associated Alumnæ at the next annual meeting in May, for it will be remembered that it was voted at the meeting in Boston last year that the question of alumnæ ownership should be settled this year.

It has been stated in these pages repeatedly that the stockholders stand ready to fulfil their moral obligation to the Associated Alumnæ, but each year of delay increases the financial value of the magazine and makes it more difficult for the association to meet the situation.

The question is more than "Shall the Associated Alumnæ own the JOURNAL?" It is, "How much money will each local alumnæ contribute towards the fund to be raised that the Associated Alumnæ may buy the JOURNAL?"

Miss McIsaac has touched a very weak spot in the situation in her open letter to alumnæ associations when she shows that each year the voting power of the Associated Alumnæ is in the hands of an entirely new set of delegates, who cannot know what has been done at previous meetings, nor be expected to deal with such knotty problems as the JOURNAL. Her suggestion should be considered by the By-Laws Committee, and perhaps a plan devised by which delegates could be appointed to serve for one, two, and three years, so that there would always be one new delegate to learn and two experienced ones to act. That would place the controlling vote in the hands of women familiar with the action taken at the previous meeting, and after three years these delegates would be a much greater power at home and the Associated Alumnæ membership of a much more stable character.

With State registration giving to nurses a legal status, the problems of the future will be more difficult to solve than those in the past have been. The responsibility of our action will extend outside the limits of our own organizations into the realm of State education and public hygiene. If we are to continue to advance, we must demonstrate our ability to meet these new requirements, whatever they may be, and we shall need our JOURNAL in the future even more than we have needed it in the past. It has become a great educational factor, and in whatever way its future management may be decided, there should be no risk taken that could create financial complications that would curtail or dwarf its development.

It should be borne in mind that the "Committee on Periodical" did its work for the Associated Alumnæ, and the time has come when the alumnæ should show its appreciation of the work of the committee by making a tremendous effort, reimbursing the stockholders and THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING Company for their outlay, assuming the management and financial risk as an association, or relinquish all claim to the JOURNAL and allow the present owners, who are all alumnæ members, to carry on the business of the magazine as an independent enterprise.

## THE OFFICIAL DEPARTMENT.

THE letter on another page signed "L." leads us to speak of a matter that has given us some thought of late, with the increase in official material that comes to us each month for publication.

Turning back to our first editorial comment in the October number, 1900, we find the following: "It will be the aim of the editors to present month by month the most useful facts, the most progressive thought, and the latest news that the profession has to offer in the most attractive form that can be secured." This policy has been followed up to the present time, and the contents of the magazine have shown the trend of nursing development during the past three and one-half years. During this time organization work in all of its branches has been the most important line of progress, and unlimited space has been given to the subject in our pages.

This letter is not the first suggestion of dissatisfaction that has reached us. We have heard murmurings from time to time of "too much fine print" in the JOURNAL, too many reports, too little of practical nursing, too much foreign news, too many pages of editorial comment, but few of our critics, unlike "L.," have suggested anything more interesting in place of the feature they object to.

We are inclined to think that "L." is right in what she says about the local reports, unless a society is doing something original, or has really valuable results of work accomplished to show. It is a subject that might well be discussed at the Associated Alumnae meeting in May.

There seems to be growing demands for more practical information on nursing subjects, and there are fields of social, educational, and preventive work opening up, with which nurses are closely affiliated, demanding space in our pages.

The "fine print" is used to economize space and is nearly twice as expensive as the larger type. Very few two-dollar journals give more than sixty-four pages. This magazine rarely issues a number with less than eighty pages, and several numbers in the year run over that figure.

The aim of the JOURNAL is to meet the demands and requirements of the nursing profession, and by the profession is meant the great masses, and not the far-advanced thinkers among nurses. The world is led everywhere by the few bright minds, but it is fed by the work of the multitude. The JOURNAL strives to lead, but its greatest work is to so guide, direct, and concentrate the work of the greater body that the individual may profit by the work of the whole.

In a technical magazine of this character each number is made up from what "the profession has to offer." We want material, and interesting material, and we are able to pay moderately for it, but practical nursing methods must come from nurses engaged in practical nursing work, and yet these women rarely contribute to our pages, although they are quite free to criticise the JOURNAL for its lack of practical suggestions.

Before the end of the year the directors will take up the question of giving so much space to official reports of societies, and we are open to suggestions along these lines.

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THE NEED OF WISE HEADS

So it will be seen that women of calm judgment and experience will be needed more than ever before at the coming Philadelphia meeting. Delegates are sent by the association they represent to work, not for a pleasure trip, and every

such delegate should study the reports of previous meetings and be prepared to act intelligently upon all questions of unfinished business, and not consume precious minutes by asking needless questions. School and sectional lines should be eliminated and every problem judged of from the professional standpoint.

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#### A CONFERENCE FOR VISITING NURSES

AN announcement of great interest to nurses is made by the president of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, Jeffrey M. Brackett, Esq., of Baltimore.

This conference holds its thirty-first annual meeting this year in Portland, Me., for the week beginning June 15. For the benefit of any who may not be entirely familiar with the work of this uniquely interesting gathering, it may be said that its purpose is to bring together workers in various forms of social service, and men and women from every part of the country who are either engaged prominently and actively in social reform, or are interested in its progress, to have a share in the proceedings. The subjects considered are the problems of poverty and suffering, of organizing charities and providing relief, of caring for destitute children, and many others.

They are treated in the usual way,—by addresses and discussions,—but what will render the conference at Portland of particular interest to nurses is the fact that the work of visiting and district nurses is to have its own place in the programme of the conference, and two special meetings have been arranged to consider this work. These meetings are appointed for Tuesday evening, June 14, and Wednesday morning, the 15th, in the parlors of the Falmouth Hotel. The programme for the two special meetings will be arranged by a committee formed of several leaders in instructive visiting nursing, and all those engaged in this work and interested in it in any way are urged to be present. Mr. Brackett, the president of the National Conference, will reach Portland in time to attend these meetings, and will do all in his power to make them successful.

There can be no doubt as to the ultimate success of this plan.

The work of the visiting nurse brings her daily into close relationship with those engaged in all the various other forms of social work, and a knowledge of their scope and purpose becomes necessary in order that they may be mutually helpful.

There will be special rates from transportation companies and reasonable rates from hotels. Portland is an interesting old New England town, beautifully situated on the coast and near the White Mountains. The middle of June is perhaps the most delightful time of the year. It is hoped that many nurses will be present, and it is possible that this might be just the time in which to establish a national society of district nurses. With sixty or more such institutions, with some hundreds of nurses, and new and growing opportunities for special work in these directions, it may be that the psychological moment has come.

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#### THE ELLEN ROBINSON FUND

IN the Personal column will be found a letter from Miss Rose, taken from the Illinois Alumnae report, in which she tells a story of an accident to one of their members quite unparalleled in our experience among nurses, and most heart-breaking when we think of one who has prepared herself to serve, young, with a

strong body and a vigorous brain, being doomed to a life of inaction and dependence.

We are told that Miss Robinson's courage has been heroic from the first; that before the dressings had been entirely removed from her right hand she was using a pencil, held between the bits of stumps of the two first fingers, and that she helps herself with great ingenuity, even in this short time.

The members of the Illinois Alumnae, with the coöperation of the Training-School Board of Managers and many citizens and physicians in Chicago, have raised a sum of money, already amounting to nearly ten thousand dollars, which is to be placed in trust for Miss Robinson during her life. Fortunately she has no one dependent upon her for whose future she must feel responsibility.

The alumnae have made no public appeal, and the money contributed has come through the personal efforts of the nurses and the men and women interested in the Illinois School, and the result is a splendid evidence of the esteem in which the Illinois School is held in Chicago. Miss Robinson has the tender sympathy of the great nursing profession of which she is a member—"once a nurse, always a nurse."

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#### PROGRESS OF REGISTRATION

##### MARYLAND.

WE understand that the Maryland bill for the registration of trained nurses has passed the Legislature unamended and is now in the hands of the Governor.

##### MASSACHUSETTS.

The Massachusetts bill has been somewhat amended, but not to detract from its value, and is still before the House.

##### IOWA.

Miss Estella Campbell, president of the Graduate Nurses' Association of Iowa, has written us a long letter, "not for publication," in which she expresses the opinion that our criticisms in the March JOURNAL were needlessly harsh, and gives the following facts in explanation of Iowa's action. She says: "Being aware of the necessity of legal authority, a committee was appointed to consult lawyers *thoroughly acquainted with the work* (italics are ours) and have a report to submit at the State meeting. Seeing that the *bills passed in other States* provided for Examining Boards to *consist of doctors*, these attorneys advised that the examinations be left in the hands of the Board of Medical Examiners for the first two years, assuring the committee that it would not be a hard matter to change the bill, once passed, and have our own Board of Examiners."

It seems that in the discussion of the bill the majority of the nurses were in favor of a Board of Examiners composed of nurses. For want of time the matter was referred to the Legislative Committee with power to act. The members of this committee were Miss Long, superintendent of the Mercy Hospital, Des Moines, graduate of the Mercy Hospital, Chicago; Miss Rogers, graduate of St. Luke's Hospital, Davenport, Ill.; Miss Grace Morton, graduate of the Illinois Training-School, with the president of the association. This committee saw fit to change the sections in the bill relating to the Examining Board, cutting out, as we understand, the provision for a board of nurse examiners and substituting the board of medical examiners.

Miss Campbell says, further, that the bill is now in the hands of Senator Young, of Washington, Ia., and "that it will not reflect unfavorably in any way upon the nurses of Iowa either from the standpoint of intellect, honor, or loyalty."

We are rejoiced to know that the nurses as a body stood for a board of nurse examiners. We feel justified in saying, however, that the Legislative Committee, to which was entrusted this most vitally important work, showed itself to be uninformed of the action of nurses in other States, and of the "great principles involved" in the registration movement.

It would be interesting to know what influences were back of these legal advisers. North Carolina is the only State having medical men on the Board of Examiners. This board is composed of two physicians and three nurses. In every other State where a bill has been passed the examiners are nurses.

Our further criticism is that of undue haste. The Legislative Committee of the Iowa nurses, according to the letter of the president, was not properly instructed, and was too ready to be advised as to what was best for nurses by people outside of the profession.

Better to be ten years in getting a good bill than to have to accept one like that of Iowa.

We cannot feel, in the light of Miss Campbell's letter, that our criticism in March was too severe, but we admit that it may have been directed towards the wrong persons. The bill remains a most unfortunate measure.

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#### MEETINGS

ANNOUNCEMENTS of the annual meetings of the New York State Nurses' Association and the Associated Alumnae are found in the Official Department. The business before both of these associations is of importance to the profession.

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#### THE BERLIN CONGRESS

NURSES going to Berlin should not fail to read Miss Dock's announcement in the Official Department.

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#### NEW YORK STANDARDS

WE call the attention of our readers interested in the standards of education for training-schools to the circular issued by the Regents of the University of the State of New York, found on page 549. It is to be borne in mind that this is the minimum upon which the standards for the future are to be based. We reserve comment until a later issue.

